

June 16, 2006 Press Release | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio voted today against H. Res 861, a partisan resolution which would rubberstamp the Bush administration's poor planning and mismanagement of the Iraq war.

The resolution endorses the Republican plan to stay the course in Iraq, with an open-ended commitment and no end in sight. A vote in favor of the resolution is a vote for staying in Iraq until at least 2009.

"I am disappointed that H. Res. 861 is a truly hollow effort," DeFazio said. "Despite the eloquent words used, the resolution has no legally binding impact. It does nothing to require a re-evaluation of U.S. policies in Iraq or to change the status quo. It does nothing to address the mistakes that have been made in Iraq.

"We all honor our troops. But we disagree, not on the noble service of the troops, but on the competence of the leadership of President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary Rumsfeld in initiating an unnecessary war in Iraq and insisting on an open-ended indefinite commitment of U.S. troops in the middle of a civil war.

"The U.S. cannot impose freedom, security, and unity in Iraq by force. The U.S. cannot force Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds to make peace or to act for the common good. Nor should the U.S. military be forced to remain in Iraq essentially as an army for one side of a civil war.

"I believe our military has already done all that has been asked of them. Saddam Hussein is on trial. The threat from alleged weapons of mass destruction programs in Iraq has been neutralized. The programs do not exist, and didn't before the war for that matter. The Iraqi people have written and adopted a new constitution and elected a new government. It is time to turn over control of the country to the Iraqi government, Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi people to build their own future.

"A plan to bring the bulk of our troops home from Iraq would free up intelligence and defense assets to redeploy to fight al-Qaeda, particularly in Afghanistan and along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and could also help the United States in our broader fight against Islamic extremists with global ambitions.

"It is unfortunate that the Republican leadership continues to prohibit an open and honest debate about the fight against radical Islamic terrorists like al-Qaeda, and the distinct issue of the best strategy for bringing our troops home from Iraq. The American people deserve better."

For Congressman DeFazio's full statement, please go to <http://defazio.house.gov/>

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